THE NEW MINISTER.

"WHAT do you think, Aunt Violet? The new minister is coming to-night!"

Miriam Blake and her cousin, Effie Towers, burst into the quiet old-fashioned sitting-room like twin gales of wind so fresh and sudden and inspiriting were they.

It was a very cheerful apartment with the crimson carpet flooded with October sunshine, the canary singing from his cage among the geraniums in the window-seat, and a bright wood fire crackling from the most burnished of brass andiorns on the hearth—for Aunt Violet loved an open fire, and adhered to it through all the modern innovations.

She was a woman past thirty, yet very pretty withal—a woman whose type of face and form would always remain youthful. Brown hair, with rippling lights of gold upon its surface; blue-gray eyes, large and shaded with long lashes; a complexion where the fresh white and red betokened perfect health and a smiling, cherry-red, melting mouth, whose smiles betrayed a singularly regular set of teeth—Miss Violet Brown was perhaps quite as attractive in her mature womanhood as she had been in her fresher girl-days.

"To-night?" said Aunt Violet. "And is the parsonage all in readiness?"

"All prepared, I believe. And what do you think, Aunt Violet," went on Miriam, with girlish eagerness, "of old Mrs. Marsh going there with her two daughters to prepare tea, and make it 'sort o' bum-like,' as she says, for him the first night?"

And Violet smiled over her crochet.

"Why," struck in Effie Towers, "the Marsh girls are as old as the hills."

"Not quite as old as the hills," said Aunt Violet, quietly. "Sarah Marsh is about my age, and Mehitable cannot be more than a year or two older."

"Oh, Aunt Violet!" said Effie, coaxingly, stealing both arms around Miss Brown's slender waist, "nobody ever thinks of your being old!"

"It's an indisputable fact nevertheless," said Aunt Violet, serenely.

"Aunt Violet," said Miriam suddenly, as she sat looking her aunt full in the face, "how I wish Mr. Smith would fall in love with you!"

Aunt Violet shrugged her shoulders.

"My dear child, isn't Brown a sufficiently common cognomen but you want to change it into the still more hackneyed name of Smith?"

"I wasn't thinking of the name, Aunt Violet—I was only reflecting to myself what a splendid minister's wife you would make."

"I shall never make anybody's wife, Miriam."

"What nonsense!" ejaculated the gay girl. "Why, aunty, you are the prettiest of our whole set, yet with your sweet-pea complexion and those big innocent eyes of yours—"

But here Effie Towers interrupted, speaking gravely with serious glance.

"I know what makes Aunt Violet speak so, Miriam—she has had a disappointment years and years ago."

"Aunty! Did you really?"

"'Years and years ago,' as Effie says, I had a lover," returned Aunt Violet, calmly. "And what interrupted the current of true love?"

"I was foolish, and wished to test my power. Clarence, that was his name, was hasty and impulsive, and my folly incensed him. So we parted."

"And is he married now?"

"I do not know. I have never seen nor heard from him since. He was only spending the summer vacation, a college student, in our quiet village."

"What was his last name?"

"N'importe, Miriam, do not let us disinter any more of the horrid past. I have told you my folly. See that you take warning by it."

And none of Miriam Blake's soft coaxings could win from Aunt Violet any further confidences.

"You are not an old maid, darling aunty," said Miriam, "but Sarah Marsh is, and I mean to enter the lists with her myself to win the new minister's favor. The parsonage would make a pretty nest for such a bird as I am, all embowered in roses and clematis, and full of delicious little by windows and maple-shaded piazzes. I hope he's young and good-looking."

"He's just thirty-five," said Effie, "for Deacon Alden told me so."

"Did he say whether he was good-looking or not?"

"No, he didn't, as if Deacon Alden cared for his looks."

"Thirty-five—that is rather old-bachelorish, but a man isn't totally past reform at thirty-five," observed Miriam, pensively. "If Aunt Violet won't have him I'll try my chance."

"I shall never marry," gravely reiterated Aunt Violet, with more seriousness than Miriam's light-jesting way seemed to call for.

"If that's the case," said Miriam, "I'll go and rip up the breadths of my lilac lawn dress, and have the fluted ruffles done up. One can't be too careful of one's advantage of costume at such a critical time, and I know Mehitable Marsh has got a white dress with blue rosebuds all over it."

"Miriam, what a rattlepate you are," said Effie.

"Don't I tell you I need a minister for a husband, just to sober me down?"

And with this Parthian arrow of retort, Miss Miriam quitted the room, with Effie following her.

Presently she came back again, dancing merrily into the room.

"I've found out my future husband's name."

"What is it?"

"A decided novelty—John Smith."

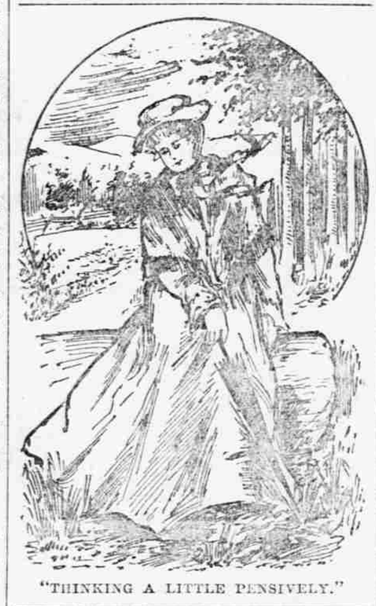
Aunt Violet smiled, and Miriam vanished once more like a twinkling bit of thistledown.

Violet Brown sat gazing into the coral depths of the bright embers that had fallen through the logs on the hearth. Somehow, spite of her assertion of self-reliance and independence, she felt very lonely that October afternoon.

"I'll go for a walk," thought Violet. "Perhaps a little exercise will dissipate this gathering despondency."

She tied a round hat under her curls, put on a coquettish scarlet circle, tasseled with white silk, which, according to her loving nieces, "made her look like a delicious little Red Riding Hood," and went out into the fresh autumn air, where the woods, all radiant with gold and crimson glories, were showering their leafy trophies on the walks below, as she entered their silent aisles.

"Autumn," she thought, sadly, "how soon it has come upon us! And it is but a little while since spring was here with her dew and roses. My spring has vanished, too, and unlike the sacred season of birds and blossoms, it will never return to me again. Heigho! I wonder what I was born



"THINKING A LITTLE PENSIVELY."

into this world for. I don't seem to be of very much use to anybody."

Violet was thinking thus, a little pensively, as she sat on a moss-enameled fallen tree, tapping the drifts of yellow leaves with the point of her parasol, and letting the fresh, fragrant wind blow the gold-brown curls back from her forehead. She was not thinking how picturesque was her attitude, nor how beautiful her face looked in its oval clearness, with pink flushes on either cheek, but both these facts struck the perceptions of a tall stranger carrying a valise in his left hand, who had just crossed the stile leading from the main road, and entered the illuminated glow of the autumnal woods.

He raised his hat with a courteous motion as Miss Brown started at his advancing footsteps.

"I beg your pardon; I fear I have unintentionally startled you."

"Not at all." Violet looked up earnestly at his face as she answered.

"Perhaps you can direct me to the shortest cut across these woods to Millhambury? I am not quite certain as to my localities."

"You are on the direct path now, Clarence Smith."

He started, in his turn, and gazed scrutinizingly into her face.

"I thought it was familiar to me!" he exclaimed, "and now I know it. Violet! who would have thought of meeting you here?"

Violet Brown trembled like an aspen leaf, but she strove to control herself.

"The world is full of just such chance meetings, Clarence."

She had half turned away, but the gentleman had put down his valise, and was evidently inclined not to part with her so readily.

"Stop, Violet—do not go away. My love! I have so longed to see you, all these years. Tell me that you have not entirely forgotten the past—that you have still a word of tenderness for the wayward lover who flung away his brightest chances of happiness long ago! Violet, you were my first love—be my last?"

"Do you love me still, Clarence?" she asked, the blue-gray eyes softening to a strangely tender brightness.

"Do I breathe and exist still? I tell you, Violet, my heart is like the century plant which only blossoms once—and its blossoming is in the sunshine of your love alone."

She was silent—lovelier than ever, Clarence thought, in the momentary indecision, the shy hesitation of her manner, as she stood under the old trees, a gold-tinted leaf drifting down here and there around her, and her tremulous hands clasped to hide their flutter as far as might be.

"Violet, darling! tell me that you love me."

"I love you, Clarence!"

There is a Garden of Eden created anew for every happy pair of lovers—and Clarence and Violet stood in Paradise now!

"But, Clarence," resumed Violet, when the first all-absorbed words and glances of their new happiness had been exchanged, "I don't comprehend this at all. How did you come here? and how did you know where to find me?"

"I did not know where to find you, Violet. Chance has been my friend here, and as for my opportune appearance on the scene, it is very easily accounted for. I have been called to take charge of the parish of Millhambury."

"Clarence, you are not the new minister?"

"But I am the new minister."

"His name is John Smith."

"I beg your pardon, mia amima—it is John Clarence Smith."

And Violet's surprise was sufficiently amusing to the reverend gentleman at her side.

Old Mrs. Bezabel Marsh and her two elderly, hard-favored daughters, had got the parsonage all ready, even to lighting the evening lamps on the study-table, and poking the clear anthracite fire that burned in the dining-room grate.

Miss Mehetable had turned the tumbler of crimson currant jelly into its cut-glass dish, and disposed the green sprigs of parsley to the most striking effect round the thinly-cut slices of boiled tongue, while Miss Sarah made a Leaning Tower of Pisa of the buttermilk biscuits, and whisked the flies away from the sugar-basin, in readiness for the expected guest, and like the hero of song, "still he came not!"

"The kittle's boilin', and the tea's all steeped," said Mrs. Marsh, as she sat in the big rocking-chair in front of the fire. "It'll be spiled if he don't come pretty soon."

"He'll be here presently now," said Miss Mehetable, loosening her curls from their confining papers. "Oh, ma! I wonder if he'll be pleased with what we've done!"

"He can't help it," said Mrs. Marsh, mentally congratulating herself on her double chances of being the minister's mother-in-law. But the words were yet on her lips and the triumphant reflections yet in her mind, when a knock came softly to the door, and Miriam Blake entered, rosy with her long walk through the frosty autumn twilight.

"Have you heard the news?" asked Miriam. "I thought I'd come over and tell you. The new minister has come."

"Sakes alive!" ejaculated Mrs. Marsh.

"I don't b'lieve it," said Mehetable.

"Oh, but he has for I've seen him. And you needn't stay here any longer, for he has concluded to remain at our house to-night."

Mrs. Marsh and her daughters both stared.

"What an airth does it all mean?" demanded the elder lady

"I'll tell you a very, very great secret," cried the delighted Miriam. "He's an old beau of Aunt Violet's, and the engagement has been renewed, and my dear little blue-eyed aunt is to be the minister's wife the very next month that ever dawn upon us!"

"Land o' Goshen!" cried Mrs. Marsh.

"Well I never!" said Miss Sarah.

"I shouldn't think," venomously commented Miss Mehetable, "that he'd want to marry an old maid."

"There are more old maids than one in the world," observed Miriam, philosophically. "So if you'll kindly lock up the room, I'll take the key back to my new uncle-that-is-to-be. I had thought of setting my cap at the new minister myself, but I cheerfully yield the palm to Aunt Violet."

She tripped home, through the dusk, laughing to herself at the discomfiture of the Marsh family. Aunt Violet and Mr. John C. Smith were sitting cozily together over the fire when she returned, and, as she passed through the room, she only paused to throw her arms around Violet's neck, and whisper:

"What do you think now about never marrying, Aunt Violet?"—The Hearthstone.

Monkey Discipline.

One of the monkey cages in the New York "Zoo" contains a mother monkey and her baby. Some visitors one day gave the mother a chocolate peppermint. She tasted it, smacked her lips, winked, and put it all into her mouth—only to remove it at once, and smack and wink much harder. After a second she repeated her experiment, and again hastily removed the peppermint.

Once more she put the dainty in her mouth, but once more took it out. Then, with watery eyes, she laid the candy carefully on the ledge of her cage, turned her back, walked over to the opposite side, seized the rails with both hands, and gazed out as if she had never seen a peppermint.

Meanwhile the baby, who had been engaged with visitors in a corner, had returned to the front. Seeing the peppermint, he picked it up and tasted it. But his mother's three experiments had left only a nibble for him. That disposed of, he, too, walked to the opposite side, seized the rails, and stood gazing out with the same air of utter absorption as his mother's.

As soon as the latter had cooled down she came back again, and looked for the peppermint. Not seeing it, she swept with one paw all along the ledge where she had left it, but in vain. Suddenly she ran to the baby, and twisting his head to face herself, put one hand on each of his jaws, pulled his mouth wide open, stuck her head in, and gave a big sniff. Then she turned him over and spanked him soundly.

We don't know that the Latin inscriptions on tombstones stand for but have an idea that, translated into English, they would mean: "He's all in."

WHEN THANKSGIVIN' COMES.

Goin' to have a joyful day
'Bout next Thursday down our way;
Relatives 'll all be here—
Comin' now fr'm far an' near.
Got a turkey home, I'll bet
Is the biggest we've had yet;
Always lots to eat, I've found
When Thanksgivin' comes around.

Pa, he'll carve the noble bird,
Tellin' all the jokes he's heard;
Ma, she'll keep things movin' right,
Everyone'll talk a sight—
All exceptin' Bill an' me;
We'll be still as still can be,
Won't have time to make a sound
When Thanksgivin' comes around.

Golly! but it's bully, though,
Havin' relatives, you know.
Ma jest smiles when Bill and I
Take a second piece of pie;
Pa, he'll only laugh and roar
When we pass our plates fer more;
Never's scolded us ner frowned
When Thanksgivin' comes around.

Uncle Jim sez me an' Bill
'S jest about ez hard to fill
Ez two elephants, but Gee!
If they'll only let us be
We won't care fer what they say,
But jest grin an' eat away,
We'll be full clear fr'm the ground
When Thanksgivin' comes around.
—Council Bluffs Nonpareil.

A THANKFUL THANKSGIVING

"I DON'T feel as if I should enjoy this Thanksgivin'," said Mrs. Joel Nisbett, looking down into the basket of glossy, red cheeked Spitzenbergs as if it were a family vault and taking up an apple as if it had been a skull; "no, I don't."

"Then, Sarepta," observed her husband, who had just thrown a huge log on the open fire, "you don't disarn nothin' to be thankful for! It's as harnsome a turkey as ever flapped, and I don't know of a year when I've had nicer pumpkins on that ar' corn lot!"

"'Tain't turkey or pumpkin pies or cranberry sass as makes Thanksgivin'," sighed Mrs. Nisbett.

"What is it, then? Ef it's cold weather, I should ha' thought the last frost would ha' done the business for you pretty fairly. Them artemisias by the from door is scorched black, and the old maple is losin' its leaves as if they was goin' down. Parson' Jarvis is comin' all the way from Sloatesville to preach to-morrow, and the quire's larned a brav' new anthem just a-purpose, about bein' thankful for harvest and all that sort of thing. I'm sure I don't know what else you'd have."

Mrs. Nisbett only answered by a sigh.

"I wonder if 'tain't possible Stephe'll be hum to-night," she said after a pause.

"He writ not. He thought he'd drop in arly to-morrow mornin' if he caught the train he expected. Only think, old woman; it's five years since Stephe was hum to Thanksgivin'!"

Old Nisbett rubbed his horny hands, with a chuckle, adding:

"And I s'pose, if all accounts is true, he's gettin' to be a great man out in that western country. It was kind of a hard pull when he went off and left us, but maybe the boy was in the right."

"Yes," said Mrs. Nisbett dolorously, "but somehow I can't get reconciled to the idea of his marryin' a strange gal out there."

Joel scratched his head. This was a phase of the subject that he scarcely felt competent to discuss.

"Maybe you'll like her. Stephen says she's a nice gal."

"Stephen says! As if a man over head and ears in love wouldn't say anything."

"I wish he'd told us who she was."

Mrs. Nisbett groaned again. Joel went out to the woodpile, the everyday shrine whence he generally derived what little of philosophic inspiration he had.

"Mrs. Nisbett!"

It was a soft little voice, and the old lady's face relaxed instinctively as it sounded on her ears.

"Why, Lida Tremaine—'tain't you!"

"It is. I've done everything that Aunt Constance wanted, and now I've just run over to see if you don't need a bit of help."

She stood in the doorway, a fair little apparition, all flushed and rosy with the November wind, while her blue eyes sparkled as if they were twin sapphires hidden away under her long, dark lashes. She was neither blond nor brunette, but a fresh cheeked girl, with nut brown hair, skin like the leaf of a damask rose, a straight, refined nose and lips as ripe as a red crabapple, though by no means so sour. Generally she had a demure sort of gravity lingering about her face, but when she did laugh a dimple came out upon her cheek and a row of pearly teeth glimmered instantaneously.

In one hand she carried a bunch of late autumn flowers.

"See!" she cried, holding them up. "I ransacked Aunt Constance's garden for these. I knew that big vase on the mantel needed something, and, with a branch or so of scarlet leaves, I'll have a royal bouquet to help you keep Thanksgiving."

Mrs. Nisbett took the fair oval face between her two hands and kissed the fresh little mouth.

"Set down, Lida," she said. "I wasn't a-calculatin' to have no sech fixin's up, but you've sech a way, child, I can't never say no to you."

"But you're going to keep Thanksgiving," cried Lida, throwing off her outer wrappings and dancing up to the looking glass like a little gale of wind, "because you invited Aunt Constance and me to dinner and because your son is coming home."

"Yes, child, yes," said Mrs. Nisbett, subsiding once more into the mournful key from which Lida's sudden appearance had momentarily aroused her. "Joel's got the turkey shut up in a coop, and the bakin's done, and I'm just a-fixin' them apples, and——"

"Oh, oh," cried Lida, who had fluttered to the window, "what glorious red leaves speckled over with little drops of gold! May I make some wreaths for the wall? Oh, please say yes"

Mrs. Nisbett said "yes"—it would have been hard work to say "no" to Lida—and the girl soon came in, her apron full of the sprigs of the old maple tree, whose shadowy boughs kept the window veiled with cool shadows through the glaring summer days and showered fading gold upon the dead grass when the autumn came.

Mrs. Nisbett looked with tenderness upon the graceful little figure seated on the hearth rug, when the shine of the high heaped logs lost itself in her bright hair and made sparkles in her eyes, as the wreaths and trails of autumn leaves grew rapidly beneath her deft fingers.

"Lida," she said softly, "Lida, my dear!" Lida looked up.

"I saw your Aunt Constance yesterday but there's somethin' reserved about her, and I didn't like to ask about you—whether you had decided to go out as a governess or not; because, my dear, Joel and I were talkin' last night, and we both thought what a comfort it would be to have you here."

"To have me here?"

"We're old and we're alone, and somehow we've both took a fancy to you, my child. So when your Aunt Constance goes back to the city, if you choose to come here"—

Mrs. Nisbett paused abruptly and burst into tears.

"We had a little girl once, my dear, and if she'd lived she would ha' been nigh about your age."

Lida let the leaves drop down on the floor as she sprang up and threw both arms round the old woman's neck.

"Oh, Mrs. Nisbett," she whispered softly, "you are so very, very kind. Believe me, I appreciate it all, but—but—I hardly know how to tell you."

Mrs. Nisbett listened intently. Lida smiled and cried a little and then whispered so low it was scarcely audible.

"I am going to be married."

"Married!" ejaculated Mrs. Nisbett, with all a woman's interest in this important piece of information. "And who to?"

"Your son lives in Iowa—in Parlington?"

"Yes."

"Well, did he ever mention the name of——"

Lida paused, her cheeks glowing roses. Old Nisbett had come in with an armful of wood, bringing a gale with him from the frosty outer world.

"I'll tell you by and by," whispered Lida as she went back to her work.

"Joel'll go out again arter awhile," thought Mrs. Nisbett, "and then I'll hear about Lida's beau."

But Joel sat down before the fire with a complacent satisfaction which bodes ill for the gratification of his wife's curiosity, and finally accompanied Lida home, thus frustrating all his wife's designs and cutting off her chance of hearing Lida's story.

"Dear me!" thought she. "I don't believe the man was ever born who knowed when he wasn't wanted! How lonesome it seems when Lida's gone! What does the girl want to get married for when I could ha' took such a sight o' comfort with her? Oh, dear, dear! It does seem as if the world was all askew!"

The next day, in spite of the weather prophet's prediction of snow, dawned clear and brilliant as the dying smile of Indian summer. By 11 o'clock Mrs. Nisbett was dressed in her best silk and cap, with the turkey browning beautifully in the oven and the cranberry tarts doing credit to themselves as well as to their maker, the table set, the fire high heaped with crackling logs and the plates dressed with coronals of autumn leaves. Aunt Constance, a tall, prim maiden lady of uncertain age, stood before the bedroom looking glass arranging her coiffure. Lida, in a blue dress with a late autumn rose in her hair, was tripping hither and thither as light footed and helpful as half a dozen household fairies merged into one, while Mrs. Nisbett stood regarding her with a loving eye, murmuring to herself:

"Well, well, it seems like it was the Lord's will to deny us of just what we most want, but if I had a daughter I could wish she was like Lida."

As the old kitchen clock struck 1 Mrs. Nisbett, looking from the window, gave a little cry.

"There he comes—there comes Joel, and, as I live, there's the boy with him!"

Lida ran into the bedroom.

When she returned, Mrs. Nisbett was clasped in the arms of a tall, handsome man of four or five and twenty.

"Lida," said the proud matron, striving to disengage herself from the affectionate clasp, "this is my son Stephen, and—why, what's the matter?"

For Stephen had dropped her hands with an exclamation of surprise and amazement, and Lida stood there glowing crimson.

"Lida! Why, mother, this is a surprise indeed that you have prepared for me!"

"I prepared!" echoed the astonished old lady. "Well, that's a good un, when I'm ten times as much surprised as you be! Lida, what does this mean?"

"It means," said Lida, with a demure smile—she was beginning to recover her scattered self-possession—"it means that this is the gentleman I am to be married to!"

"Stephen!" cried Mrs. Nisbett, "is Lida to be your wife?"

"She has given me her promise to that effect, at least," said Stephen, looking proudly down upon his lovely little fiancee.

"Well, if it don't beat all how queer things do happen!" said Mrs. Nisbett, her face radiant. "And you've been livin' neighbor to me these six weeks and I never knowed it. Lida, why didn't you tell me?"

"Because I never dreamed that Stephen Risingham, my betrothed western lover, was anything to Mrs. Nisbett," said Lida, laughing.

"There 'tis, now!" ejaculated the farmer. "How was she to know that he was only my nephew, adopted when his parents died, twenty good years ago? We've always called him son, and he's always been a son to us. But Lida didn't know. Old woman, what do you say to Stephen's wife?"

Mrs. Nisbett clasped Lida to her heart.

"I do say," she ejaculated, "this is the thankfullest Thanksgivin' I ever lived to see!"—New York Daily News.

On Thanksgiving Week.

The Leader of the Runaways—Don't be alarmed, my dears; it's nothing but a vegetarian hunting for edible fungi.

Thanksgiving Day.

Our pilgrim fathers left us a good example when they set aside a day which to devote our thoughts to counting up the blessings of the year—not only to outside causes of prosperity, such as the abundance of our crops, the good fruit year, peace and plenty everywhere, but we should count our personal blessings, "one by one;" even in those where sorrow and trouble are ever present—the blessings would outnumber the afflictions.

Is it not something to see the blue sky and the green fields, to hear the joyous song of the birds, to have the use of our limbs, and, better far, a clear brain and an active mind? Let us keep our hearts tuned to praise and thankegiving, then we will bring smiles to other faces that seldom smile. These are little things, but life is made up of little things.

Soliloquy of a Turkey.

I know that Thanksgiving day's most here,
And it makes me long to fly,
For I've reached my prime, and it's mighty clear
That it's time for me to die.
I saw the head of the house come out,
And he smiled as he gazed at me,
And he cried aloud that there was no doubt
What a comfortable meal I'd be.
Oh, I've got to go! And it gives me a fit,
Thought it isn't so much for my life
That I care about, but he can't carve a bit,
And I've got to be hacked by his wife.
—New York Herald.